

# Small Game Harvest 2004-05

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## **Abstract**

The number of small game hunters decreased 3.8% in 2004-05 small game hunting season from 2003-04 levels. This is the third decrease in license sales in the last four years. The estimated harvest decreased from last season for quail, cottontail, coyote, crow, gray fox, gray partridge, pheasant, red fox, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, and squirrel and increased for mourning dove, raccoon, and woodcock.

## **Methods**

A sample of survey names was drawn from 2004-05 sports, small game, senior citizen small game, junior small game, and conservation patron license holders in proportion to the license sales for each county. Ten thousand surveys were mailed in early February. Surveys asked recipients for information on whether they hunted, type of licenses purchased, county of residence, species harvested, number of days hunting each species, and county of harvest for each species. These data were entered into the DNR UNIX production server and analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

## **Results**

Responses were received from 3,837 of the hunters surveyed. The response rate was 38%.

The number of people who bought small game, sportsman, senior citizen small game, non-resident small game, 5-day non-resident small game, or conservation patron licenses decreased from 293,438 in 2003-04 to 282,261 in 2004-2005. The total number of days spent in the field pursuing small game decreased by 9% during the 2004-05 season compared to last season. The estimated harvest decreased from last season for bobwhite quail, cottontail, coyote, crow, gray fox, gray partridge, pheasant, red fox, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, and squirrel, and increased for mourning dove, raccoon, and woodcock (Table 1).

No corrections are made for response or prestige bias. Therefore the harvest estimates for some of the less hunted species (bobwhite quail, gray partridge, and gray fox,) are probably less accurate. Small sample size can also have an effect on the results of the counties of highest harvest. Because of this, counties of highest harvest should be viewed with caution. The twenty-year trend in small game harvest for all species is shown in Figure 1.

**Table 1.** *The number of small game hunters, percent of total hunters, days hunted, harvest, harvest/day, and top three counties of harvest for all small game species during the 2004-05 season.*

Species	Number of Hunters	Percent Hunting	Days Hunted*		Harvest*		Harvest/Day	Top Three Counties
Bobwhite Quail	649	0.2%	3,972	±4,286	662	±803	0.17	Fond Du Lac, Iowa, Brown
Cottontail	56,424	20.0%	246,951	±25,721	239,521	±32,706	0.97	Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Dane
Coyote	31,331	11.1%	179,714	±29,603	36,929	±11,191	0.21	Grant, Wood, Chippewa
Crow	12,956	4.6%	56,055	±14,146	59,218	±16,423	1.06	Manitowoc, Jackson, Columbia
Gray Fox	4,996	1.8%	19,200	±5,694	4,267	±2,725	0.22	Dodge, Jackson, Rock
Gray Partridge	1,242	0.4%	4,414	±3,096	441	±539	0.10	Polk, Fond Du Lac, Dane
Mourning Dove	22,355	7.9%	92,174	±14,894	148,744	±31,245	1.61	Racine, Grant, Waukesha
Pheasant	69,944	24.8%	449,249	±44,334	180,744	±21,618	0.40	Fond Du Lac, Dane, Iowa
Raccoon	10,754	3.8%	86,657	±24,018	136,459	±45,500	1.57	Sauk, Vernon, Ozaukee
Red Fox	9,851	3.5%	46,418	±11,354	4,634	±1,846	0.10	Sheboygan, Rock, Fond Du Lac
Ruffed Grouse	97,549	34.6%	635,584	±44,542	211,420	±22,062	0.33	Oneida, Forest, Marinette
Snowshoe Hare	12,221	4.3%	47,963	±13,660	22,657	±7,692	0.47	Lincoln, Bayfield, Price
Squirrel	69,662	24.7%	412,688	±37,172	559,225	±63,887	1.36	Portage, Sauk, Dane
Woodcock	22,129	7.8%	128,000	±20,063	53,333	±12,265	0.42	Marinette, Oneida, Forest

\* Confidence interval is 95%.

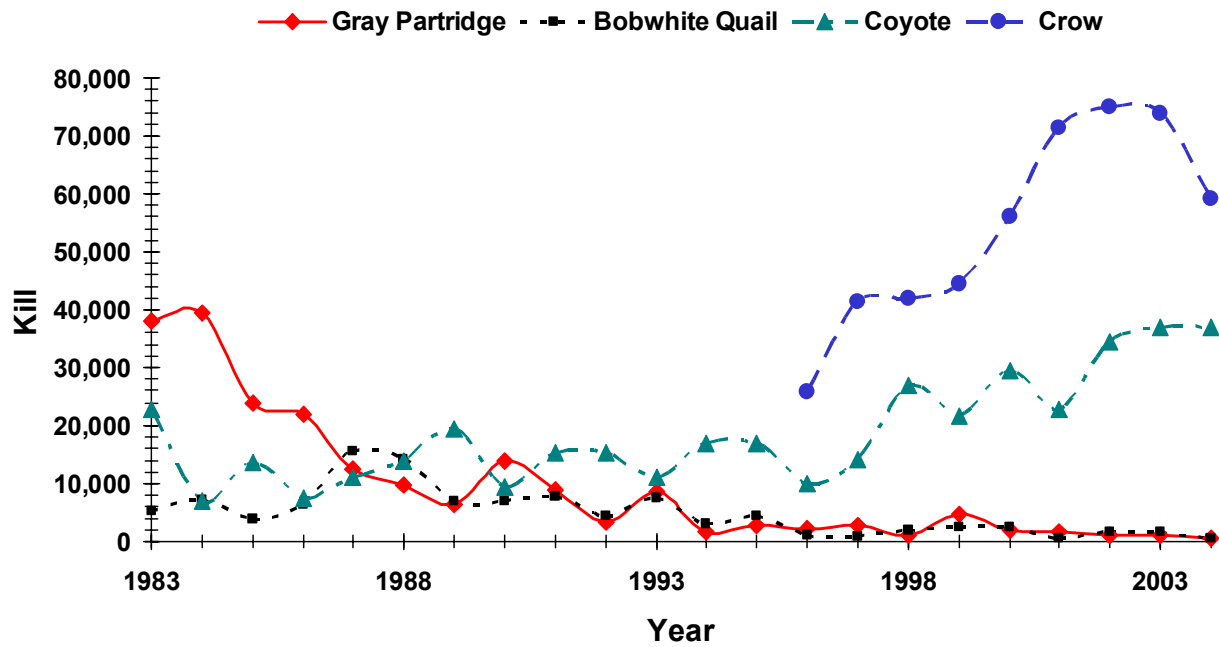
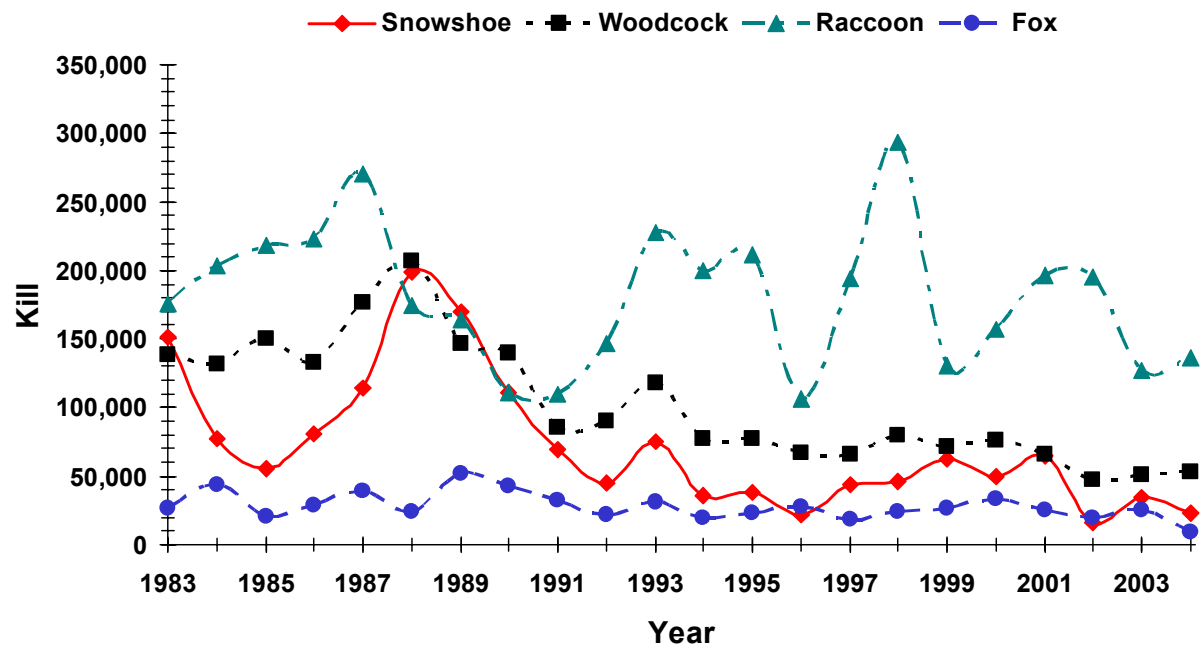


Figure 1. Small game harvest trends for all species 1983-2004.

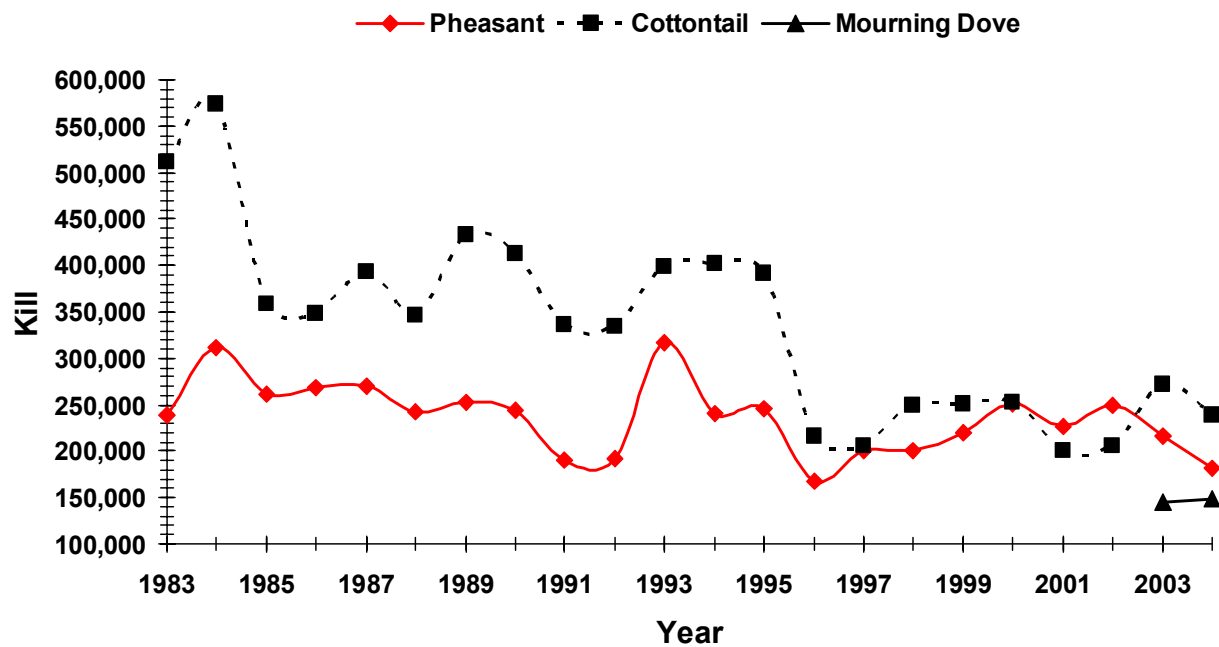
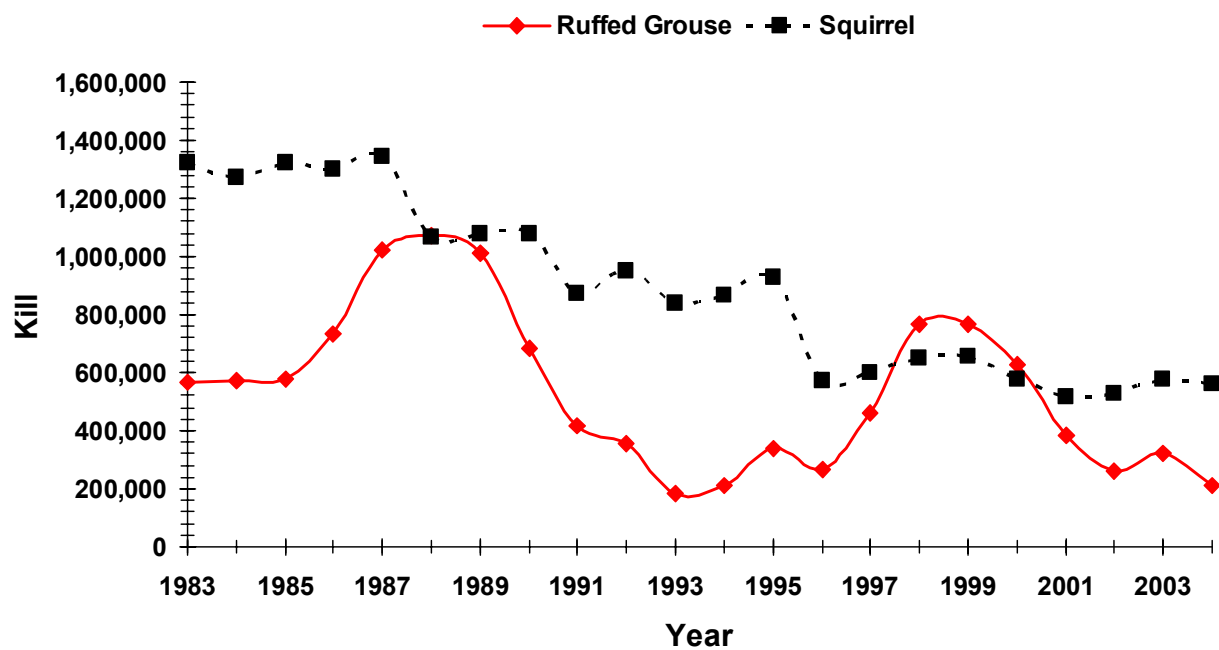


Figure 1. Small game harvest trends for all species 1983-2004 (continued).